

9. (New) A nitride semiconductor laser comprising  
a GaN substrate having a single-crystal GaN layer at least on its surface and  
device-forming layers made of nitride semiconductor that are formed on said GaN substrate,  
wherein said single-crystal GaN layer is formed through a lateral-growth process; and  
said device-forming layer contacting said GaN substrate is made of  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  ( $0 < a \leq 1$ ).
10. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 9, wherein said device-forming layer contacting said GaN substrate is made of  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  ( $0 < a < 0.3$ ).
11. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 9, wherein said device-forming layer contacting said GaN substrate is made of  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  ( $0 < a < 0.1$ ).
12. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 9, wherein said device-forming layer contacting said GaN substrate has a thickness of not less than 1  $\mu\text{m}$ .
13. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 9, wherein said device-forming layer contacting said GaN substrate has a thickness of 3 to 10  $\mu\text{m}$ .
14. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 9, wherein said device-forming layers include

an  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  ( $0 < a \leq 1$ ) layer contacting said GaN substrate, an n-type cladding layer containing Al, an active layer containing InGaN, and a p-type cladding layer containing Al.

15. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 14, wherein said  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  layer contacting said GaN substrate has been grown without an impurity doping.

16. (New) The nitride semiconductor laser according to claim 14, wherein said device forming layers include a crack-preventing layer made of indium gallium nitride intervening between said  $\text{Al}_a\text{Ga}_{1-a}\text{N}$  layer and said n-type cladding layer.